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Letter dated 8 October 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group, a cross-regional group of 25 States that advocates greater accountability, coherence and transparency on the part of the Security Council, I would like to welcome the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507) revising an earlier note (S/2010/507) and emphasize the importance of the efforts of Japan in chairing the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We thank all members of the Informal Working Group for their work leading to the adoption of the revised note on 30 August, and in particular Japan for its continuous work and perseverance during the negotiations.

The ACT Group would like to underline the importance of implementing new provisions contained in the note, which are in line with provisions advocated by the Group regarding Security Council working methods.

The ACT Group very much welcomes the comprehensiveness of the revised note, which integrates the 13 presidential notes adopted since 2010. Considering the most recent of these notes, S/2016/619, the Group appreciates the changes made to allow incoming elected members of the Council to be better prepared and the efforts undertaken to enhance the appointment process of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies.

With regard to the drafting process of outcome documents of the Council, the ACT Group commends the provisions regarding co-penholdership, the encouragement to leave sufficient time for delegations to consider drafts and the holding of at least one round of discussions with all Council members.

New provisions aimed at better planning of the Council's business, such as discussing the monthly programme of work with other Council members well in advance, encouraging briefers to be succinct and direct, making more effective use of "Other matters" and suggesting elements to the press, are very welcome and necessary. The possibilities provided to the Peacebuilding Commission to participate in the work of the Council (para. 95) are further positively noted.

Concerning the format of open debates, the ACT Group welcomes the Council's commitment to take steps to improve its focus and interactivity (para. 43). It encourages the Council to follow this commitment closely and to provide pathways towards conducting open debates in a more effective and interactive manner. In this regard, the Group welcomes the recognized importance of concept notes (para. 40). In future revisions, we hope that the Council, besides drafting

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concept notes, will also consider a timely distribution of those notes in order to provide Member States with sufficient time for preparation.

The ACT Group also welcomes the efforts to enhance the dialogue with non-Council members and bodies, especially with regard to the importance of annual joint consultative meetings and informal dialogues with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union for the first time. The considerations of Security Council missions and joint missions with, for example, the African Union are also positive. However, the Group encourages Council members to hold briefings about conducted missions in a timely, inclusive and comprehensive manner, providing relevant and substantial information as well as key insights gathered.

Regarding the Council's annual report, while the ACT Group has continuously advocated that it be made more substantial and analytical and thus commends paragraph 139 of the revised note (S/2017/507), it regrets the lack of progress.

The ACT Group hopes that the revised note will bring about positive results for a more transparent, efficient and accountable Security Council. In order to make the note and the suggestions therein meaningful and effective, the Group calls upon the Council to implement these measures in a consistent, serious and transparent manner.

The ACT Group remains committed to contributing to the overall discussion regarding working methods and interaction between the Council and the wider membership. In this respect, it refers to the statement by the President of the Security Council of 30 October 2015 (S/PRST/2015/19), in which the Council committed to holding an annual open debate on its working methods. We ask for this practice to be continued.

I would appreciate your having the present letter circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Jürg **Lauber**
Ambassador